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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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THOUGH I am an old fellow, I am neither ſour nor ſilly enough yet, to be a ſnarling *laudator temporis acti*, and to hate or deſpiſe the preſent age becauſe it *is* the preſent. I cannot, like many of my cotemporaries, rail at the *wonderful degeneracy* and *corruption of theſe times*, nor by ſneering compliments to the *ingenious*, the *ſagacious* MODERNS, intimate that they have not common ſenſe. I really do not think that the preſent age is marked out by any new and diſtinguiſhed vices and follies, unknown to former ages. On the contrary, I am apt to ſuſpect that human nature was always very like what it is at this day, and that men from the time of my great progenitor down to this moment, have always had in them the ſame ſeeds of virtue and vice, wiſdom and folly, of which only the modes have varied, from climate, education, and a thouſand other conſpiring cauſes.

PERHAPS

PERHAPS this uncommon good-humour and indulgence of mine to my cotemporaries may be owing to the natural benignity of my conſtitution, in which I can diſcover no particles of envy or ill-nature, even to my rivals both in fame and profit, the weekly writers; or perhaps to the ſuperiority of my parts, which everybody muſt acknowledge, and which places me infinitely above the mean ſentiments of envy and jealouſy. But whatever may be the true cauſe, which probably neither my readers nor I ſhall ever diſcover with preciſion, this at leaſt is certain, that the preſent age has not only the honour and pleaſure of being extremely well with me, but if I dare ſay ſo, better than any that I have yet either heard or read of. Both vices and virtues are ſmoothed and ſoftened by manners; and though they exiſt as they ever have done, yet the former are become leſs barbarous, and the latter leſs rough. Inſomuch that I am as glad as Mr. Voltaire can be, that I have the good fortune to live in this age; independently of that intereſted conſideration, that it is rather better to be ſtill alive, than only to have lived.

THIS my benevolence to my countrymen and cotemporaries ought to be eſteemed ſtill the more meritorious in me, when I ſhall make it appear that no man's merit has been leſs attended to or rewarded than mine: and nothing produces ill-humour, rancour, and malevolence ſo much, as neglected and unrewarded merit.

THE utility of my weekly labours is evident, and their effects wherever they are read, prodigious. They are equally calculated, I may ſay it without vanity, to form the heart, improve the underſtanding, and pleaſe the fancy. Notwithſtanding all which, the ungrateful public does not take above three thouſand of them a week. Though, according to Mr. Maitland's calculation of the number of inhabitants of this great metropolis, they ought to take two hundred thouſand of them, ſuppoſing only five perſons, and one paper, to each family: and allowing ſeven millions of ſouls in the reſt of the kingdom, I may modeſtly ſay, that one million more of them ought to be taken and circulated in the country. The profit ariſing

ſing from the ſale of twelve hundred thouſand papers, would be ſome encouragement to me to continue theſe my labours for the benefit of mankind.

I HAVE not yet had the leaſt intimation from the miniſters, that they have any thoughts of calling me to their aſſiſtance, and giving me ſome conſiderable employment of honour and profit: and having had no ſuch intimations, I am juſtly apprehenſive that they have no ſuch intentions. Such intimations being always long previous to the performance, often to the intentions.

NOR have I been invited, as I confeſs I expected to be, by any conſiderable borough or county to repreſent them in the next parliament, and to defend their liberties, and the chriſtian religion, againſt the miniſters and the jews. But I think, I can account for this ſeeming ſlight, without mortification to my vanity and ſelf-love; my name being a Pentateuch name, which, in theſe ſuſpicious and doubtful times, ſavours too ſtrongly of Judaiſm; though upon the faith of a chriſtian, I have not the leaſt tendency to it; and I muſt do Mrs. Fitz-Adam (who I own has ſome influence over me) the juſtice to ſay, that ſhe has the utmoſt horror for thoſe ſanguinary rites and ceremonies.

NOTWITHSTANDING all this ill uſage (for every man may be juſtly ſaid to be ill-uſed, who is not rewarded according to his own eſtimation of his own merit) which I feel and lament, I cannot however call the preſent age names, and brand it with degeneracy. Nature, as I have already obſerved, being always the ſame, modes only varying. With modes, the ſignification of words alſo varies, and in the courſe of thoſe variations, convey ideas very different from thoſe which they were originally intended to expreſs. I could give numberleſs inſtances of this kind, but at preſent I ſhall content myſelf with this ſingle one.

THE word HONOUR, in it's proper ſignification, doubtleſs implies, the united ſentiments of virtue, truth, and juſtice, carried by a generous mind beyond thoſe mere moral obligations which the laws require, or can puniſh the violation of. A true MAN of HONOUR will not content himſelf with the literal diſcharge of the duties of a man

man and a citizen; he raiſes and dignifies them into magnanimity. He gives where he may with juſtice refuſe; he forgives where he may with juſtice reſent; and his whole conduct is directed by the noble ſentiments of his own unvitiated heart; ſurer, and more ſcrupulous guides than the laws of the land, which being calculated for the generality of mankind, muſt neceſſarily be more a reſtraint upon vices in general, than an invitation and reward of particular virtues. But theſe extenſive and compound notions of HONOUR have been long contracted, and reduced to the ſingle one of perſonal courage. Among the Romans, HONOUR meant no more than contempt of dangers and death in the ſervice, whether juſt or unjuſt, of their country. Their ſucceſſors and conquerors, the Goths and Vandals, who did not deal much in complex ideas, ſimplified thoſe of HONOUR, and reduced them to this plain and ſingle one, of fighting for fighting's ſake, upon any, or all, no matter what, occaſions.

OUR preſent mode of HONOUR is ſomething more compounded, as will appear by the true character which I ſhall now give of a faſhionable MAN of HONOUR.

* A GENTLEMAN, which is now the genteel ſynonymous term for a MAN of HONOUR, muſt, like his Gothic anceſtors, be ready for and rather deſirous of ſingle combat. And if by a proper degree of wrong-headedneſs he provokes it, he is only ſo much the more jealous of his HONOUR, and more of a GENTLEMAN.

HE may lie with impunity, if he is neither detected nor accuſed of it: for it is not the lie he tells, but the lie he is told of, that diſhonours him. In that caſe he demonſtrates his veracity by his ſword or his piſtol, and either kills or is killed with the greateſt HONOUR.

HE may abuſe and ſtarve his own wife, daughters, or ſiſters, and he may ſeduce thoſe of other men, particularly his friends, with inviolate HONOUR, becauſe, as Sir John Brute very juſtly obſerves, *he wears a ſword.*

BY

* *A gentleman, is every man, who with a tolerable ſuit of cloaths, a ſword by his ſide, and a watch and ſnuff-box in his pockets, aſſerts himſelf to be a gentleman, ſwears with energy that he will be treated as ſuch, and that he will cut the throat of any man who preſumes to ſay the contrary.*

By the laws of HONOUR he is not obliged to pay his ſervants or his tradeſmen; for as they are a pack of ſcoundrels, they cannot without inſolence demand their due of a gentleman: but he muſt punctually pay his gaming debts to the ſharpers who have cheated him; for thoſe debts are really debts of HONOUR.

He lies under one diſagreeable reſtraint; for he muſt not cheat at play, unleſs in a horſe-match: but then he may with great HONOUR defraud in an office, or betray a truſt.

In public affairs, he may, not only with HONOUR, but even with ſome degree of LUSTRE, be in the ſame ſeſſion a turbulent patriot, oppoſing the beſt meaſures, and a ſervile courtier, promoting the worſt; provided a very lucrative conſideration be known to be the motive of his converſion: for in that caſe the point of HONOUR turns ſingly upon the *Quantum*.

From theſe premiſes, which the more they are conſidered the truer they will be found, it appears that there are but two things, which a man of the niceſt HONOUR may not do, which are declining ſingle combat, and cheating at play. Strange! that VIRTUE ſhould be ſo difficult, and HONOUR, it's ſuperior, ſo eaſy to attain to!

The uninformed herd of mankind are governed by words and names, which they implicitly receive without either knowing or aſking their meaning. Even the philoſophical and religious controverſies, for the laſt three or four thouſand years, have turned much more upon words and names, unaſcertained and miſunderſtood, than upon things fairly ſtated. The polite world, to ſave time and trouble, receive, adapt, and uſe words, in the ſignification of the day; not having leiſure nor inclinations to examine and analiſe them: and thus often miſled by ſounds, and not always ſecured by ſenſe, they are hurried into fatal errors, which they do not give their underſtandings fair play enough to prevent.

In explaining words, therefore, and bringing them back to their true ſignification, one may ſometimes happen to expoſe and explode thoſe errors, which the abuſe of them both occaſions and protects. May that be the good fortune of this day's paper! How many unthinking